Near Zero Power RF and Sensor Operations (N-ZERO)

General Overview of the BAA Process

Michael Blackstone
DARPA/CMO

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Proposers Day Disclaimer

➢ **Plenty of good information is made available to potential proposers to help clarify program goals/objectives and proposal preparation instructions - those things that are stipulated in the BAA.**

➢ **However:**

   ➢ Only the information/instructions in the BAA counts.

   ➢ Proposals will only be evaluated in accordance with the instructions provided in the BAA.

   ➢ Any response provided by the Government in the FAQ that's different than what is provided in the BAA will be effected by an amendment to the BAA.

      • Such responses will make note of an impending BAA amendment.

Only a duly authorized Contracting Officer may obligate the Government.

BAA Process

- **Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) has been released utilizing the procedures stipulated at FAR 35.016.**
  - BAA's may be used by agencies to fulfill their requirements for scientific study and experimentation directed toward advancing the state-of-the-art or increasing knowledge or understanding (Science and Technology) rather than focusing on a specific system or hardware solution.
    - Science and Technology (S&T) is what DARPA does.

- **Per FAR 35.016 -**
  The BAA, together with any supporting documents, shall—
  - Describe the agency's research interest (program or broad research interests);
  - Describe the criteria for selecting the proposals, their relative importance, and the method of evaluation;
  - Specify the period of time during which proposals submitted in response to the BAA will be accepted; and
  - Contain instructions for the preparation and submission of proposals.

- **Per FAR 35.016 -**
  - Proposals received as a result of the BAA shall be evaluated in accordance with evaluation criteria specified therein through a peer or scientific review process.
  - Proposals need not be evaluated against each other since they are not submitted in accordance with a common work statement.
  - The primary basis for selecting proposals for acceptance shall be technical, importance to agency programs, and fund availability. Cost realism and reasonableness shall also be considered to the extent appropriate.

- - That's it, as far as the regulations go - -

BAA Process

- **BAA allows for a variety of technical solutions and award instrument types.**
  - The BAA defines the problem set, the proposer defines the solution (and SOW).
  - All award instrument types are available for consideration:
    - Procurement Contract (FAR/DFARS)
    - Grant or Cooperative Agreement (DoDGARs)
    - Other Transactions Agreement (DoDGARs, 845, etc.).

- **DARPA Scientific Review Process.**
  - Proposals are evaluated on individual merit and relevance as it relates to the stated research goals/objectives rather than against one another (there is no common statement of work).
  - Selections will be made to proposers whose proposals are determined to be most advantageous to the Government, all factors considered, including potential contributions to research program and availability of funding.
  - Government may select for negotiation all, some, or none of the proposals received.
  - Government may accept proposals in their entirety or select only portions thereof.

BAA Process

- **BAA Evaluation Criteria (in descending order of importance):**

  a) <u>Overall Scientific and Technical Merit</u>.

  The proposed technical approach is feasible, achievable, complete and supported by a proposed technical team that has the expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed tasks.
    - Complete/Clearly delineated task descriptions, deliverables, milestones, & schedule.

  b) <u>Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission</u>.

  The potential contributions of the proposed effort with relevance to the national technology base will be evaluated.

  c) <u>Cost Realism</u>.

  The objective of this criterion is to establish that the proposed costs are realistic for the technical and management approach offered, as well as to determine the proposer's practical understanding of the effort.
    - Based on realistic assumptions
    - Reflect a sufficient understanding of the technical goals and objectives
    - Consistent with the proposer's technical approach (to include the Statement of Word)

  d) <u>Plans and Capabilities to Accomplish Technology Transition</u>.

  The proposer will be evaluated on their capability to transition the technology to the research, industrial, and/or operational military communities in such a way as to enhance U.S. defense.
    - The extent to which Data Rights restrictions result in potential transition barriers.

BAA Process

- **BAA includes an abstract phase (due 20 February 2015).**
  - Not required (but strongly encouraged).
  - 12 pages for TA-1A, 1B, or both 1A & 1B; 7 pages for TA-2.
  - Submit via TFIMS only (no hardcopy, grants.gov, email, fax, or mail).

- **6.1 & 6.2 funding is currently anticipated for the program.**
  - **6.1: All performers - Fundamental Research, no publication restrictions apply.**
  - **6.2: Universities - Fundamental Research, no publication restrictions apply.**
  - **6.2: Other than Universities - Non-Fundamental/Restricted Research, publication restrictions apply)**

- **Government expects program goals may be met by proposers intending to perform Fundamental Research.**

- **No portion of the BAA will be set aside for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Small Businesses, Small Disadvantaged Businesses and Minority Institutions (MIs) and no preferences apply.**

- **The BAA, and any amendments thereto, is posted on https://www.fbo.gov/ and http://www.grants.gov/.**

Eligibility Issues

- **All interested/qualified sources may respond subject to the parameters outlined in BAA.**

- **Foreign participants/resources may participate to the extent allowed by applicable Security Regulations, Export Control Laws, Non-Disclosure Agreements, etc. (No classified proposals anticipated).**

- **FFRDCs and Government entities are subject to applicable direct competition limitations and cannot propose to a DARPA BAA in any capacity, unless they clearly demonstrate the work is NOT otherwise available from the private sector AND provide written documentation citing the specific statutory authority establishing eligibility to propose to Government solicitations and letter from Government Sponsor.**

- **Conflicts of Interest (Real and/or Perceived).**
  - Proposal must identify and potential conflict and discuss mitigation for each.
  - Proposal must disclose whether any team member is currently supplying SETA support to any DARPA office.
  - Failure to provide required COI affirmation may result in proposal rejection without technical evaluation or further consideration for award.

Program Structure

- **TA-1A = RF Microsystems: 39 Months (ACA)**
- **TA-1B = Physical Sensor Microsystems: 39 Months (ACA)**
  - Phase 1: 15 Months
  - Phase 2 (Option): 12 Months
  - Phase 3 (Option): 12 Months

- **TA-2A = Digitizing Sensor Microsystems: 27 – 33 Months (ACA)**
- **TA-2B = RF Voltage Amplifiers: 27 – 33 Months (ACA)**
- **TA-2C = Low-Threshold Comparators: 27 – 33 Months (ACA)**
  - Phase 1: 15 Months.
  - Phase 2 (Option): Between 12 & 18 Months.

- **Program Metrics are depicted at Tables 1 through 5 of the BAA (by phase).**
- **Deliverables:**
  - TA1: 3 microsystems at the end of each phase.
  - TA-1A: + data file(s).
  - TA-1 & TA-2: Quarterly Tech/Financial Status Reports, Final Report (Per Phase)

Proposal Submission

- **A single proposal may address:**
    - Only Technical Area 1A (RF Microsystems)
    - Only Technical Area 1B (Physical Sensor Microsystems)
    - Both Technical Areas 1A and 1B (RF and Physical Sensor Microsystems)
    - Only Technical Area 2A (Digitizing Sensor Microsystems)
    - Only Technical Area 2B (RF Voltage Amplifiers)
    - Only Technical Area 2C (Low-Threshold Comparators)

- **Proposals for Contracts and OTs must be submitted via TFIMS.**

- **Proposals for Assistance Instruments must be submitted via grants.gov or in hardcopy (mail).**

- **Proposals are due 23 April 2015 (2pm Eastern) - proposals received after the due date/time will not be reviewed. Late is Late!**

    - Recommend submitting at least 48 hours prior to due date if using grants.gov.
    - At least one PI ignores this recommendation every time – DON'T BE THAT PI.

Proposal Submission & Award

- **It is the proposer's responsibility to submit on time – don't wait until the afternoon of the due date to submit electronically, especially when submitting to grants.gov.**
  - Recommend submitting at least 48 hours prior to due date if using grants.gov.
  - At least one PI ignores this recommendation every time – DON'T BE THAT PI.

- **Multiple awards are anticipated.**

- **Funds Availability (Anticipated):**
  - TA-1 ~ $25M
  - TA-2 ~ $5M
  - No further information regarding funding is available to proposers.

  ➢ Performance will be continually evaluated based on the likelihood that progress will lead to achievement of the final program goals.

  ➢ DARPA does not guarantee continued funding in the event that intermediate milestones are not accomplished or if it should be determined that substantial progress is unlikely.

Proposal Preparation
(Volume I - Technical Proposal)

Section I – Administrative Information

   - Cover Sheet.   - Transmittal Letter (from authorized representative).

Section II - Detailed Proposal Information

Tech Area/Topic	Page Limitation
TA-1A & TA-1B	30
TA-1A or TA-1B	25
TA-2 (A, B, or C)	20
A. Executive Summary	1
B. Teaming Plan	1
C. Technical Approach	[…]
D. State-of-the-Art Comparison	2
E. Statement of Work	[…]
F. Deliverables	[…]
G. Risk Mitigation Plan	1
H. Schedule & Milestones	3
I. Previous Accomplishments	1
J. Facilities	1
K. Tech Transfer	1 (Data Rights Cert – N/A)
L. Summary Slide (Attachment 2)	1 Slide (Not part of page count)

C. Technical Rationale & Approach

– Centerpiece of the proposal (succinctly describing uniqueness and benefits of approach).

– Detailed description of the technical approach, technical rationale, and constructive plan for accomplishment of technical goals in support of innovative claims and deliverables.

– Detailed analysis of how the proposed approach will meet both the DARPA and Performer defined metrics.

– Pay close attention to the program-specific elements that must be discussed.

E. Statement of Work (SOW)

➢ Use Plain English.

➢ Do not include proprietary info (will become part of the award instrument)

➢ Organize by Technical Area (and then by Phase).

➢ Clearly define all research metrics.

➢ Succinctly and clearly define tasks & subtasks

- Tasks – primary performer, duration, dependencies, completion criteria and deliverables.

- Identify any tasks that will be accomplished on-campus at a university.

➢ Preparing the SOW as called for in the BAA will support cost realism assessment & save time during negotiations.

Proposal Preparation
(Volume I - Technical Proposal)

H. Schedule and Measurable Milestones.

- Recommend providing a graphical depiction of the schedule (by TA and Phase) showing tasks/subtasks and measurable milestones.
  - Dependencies among tasks/subtasks could be depicted as well.
- Measurable milestones should capture key development points in tasks and should be clearly articulated and defined in time relative to start of effort.

Section III – Additional Information

- Brief bibliography of relevant technical papers and research notes.
- Up to 3 papers can be included.

➢ **Government Provided Data is needed for proper proposal preparation.**
- TA-1A: RF Data
- TA-1B: Sensor Data

➢ **Keep an eye out in the "Funding Opportunity Description" section of the BAA for proposal preparation instructions**
- Often the finer details are found here.

Proposal Preparation
(Volume II - Cost Proposal)

- No page limit.
- Those Seeking a Contract (FAR/DFARS)
  - Certified Cost and Pricing Information
    - Required if proposal amount exceeds $700,000.
    - Only exception (DoD Waiver) is for nonprofit organizations, including educational institutions.
    - No exception for FFRDC's (unless a non-profit research org).
    - Applies to for-profit subcontractors as well (primes must provide analysis).
  - Detailed cost build-ups by phase, task and month.
  - Provide ALL that is stipulated in the BAA and FAR Part 15 (Table 15-2).
    - Proposal Adequacy Checklist (DFARS 252.215-7009) is required.

- All Others (Non-profits/Schools, Assistance Instruments, OT's)
  - Other than cost/pricing information is required – provide what the BAA asks for, it ensures reviewers will fully understand what you are proposing.

- Everybody
  - <u>Strongly encouraged</u> to provide cost build-ups using MS Excel with editable cells that include all formulas.
  - Cost Volume Proposer Checklist is required (Attachment 1)

Proposal Preparation
(Volume II - Cost Proposal)

- **SF 1408**
  - Preaward Survey of Prospective Contractor Accounting System.
  - Must be completed if seeking a cost reimbursement type contract and proposer does not currently possess a DCAA-approved cost accounting system.
  - After selection, the process to obtain DCAA approval can take anywhere from 60 to 90 days (on average).
  - Contract cannot be awarded until DCAA approval has been obtained.

- **Subcontracting Issues**
  - Subcontracting Plan: Is required for contracts over $650,000 to large businesses with subcontracting possibilities.
  - Subcontractor Proposal(s):
    - The prime contractors submission MUST include, at a minimum, a non-proprietary, subcontractor proposal for EACH subcontractor.
    - All subcontractors MUST be able to submit a fully disclosed version of their proposal directly to the Government immediately upon request.
  - If utilizing FFRDC or Government entity, the proposal MUST included the required eligibility information (this is the primes responsibility).

Proposal Preparation
(Misc.)

- **Recommend that proposals remain valid for a minimum of 120 days.**

- **Expected award date (for pricing purposes): ~ 1 September 2015.**

- **Other Transactions Agreements:**
  - Must include a detailed list of payable milestones.
  - Each milestone must include: number, milestone description, completion criteria, due date, and payment amount (Government and Performers amounts if cost share is proposed).
  - Most applicable OTA for this BAA is a Technology Investment Agreement (TIA) due to the dual-use implications of the resulting technology.

- Following the proposal preparation instructions assists the evaluation team to clearly understand what is being proposed and supports a timely negotiation.

- Proposers are cautioned that evaluation ratings may be lowered and/or proposals rejected if proposal submittal or preparation instructions are not followed.

Intellectual Property

- **Government desires Unlimited Rights to data and/or software deliverables.**

- **However, if necessary to deliver any items (data or software) to which the Government will receive less than Unlimited Rights, they must be identified in the proposal:**
  - Break out the assertions in a separate table (Data Rights Cert) which will be included as an attachment to any resultant contract
  - Provide and justify basis of assertions in the prescribed format.
  - Explain how the Government will be able to reach its program goals (including transition)
  - Provide possible nonproprietary alternatives in any areas that might present transition difficulties or increased risk or cost to the Government under the proposed proprietary solution.

  - ➤The above Data Rights Cert includes prime and sub info, as applicable.
  - ➤Provide even if you are proposing other than a contract.
  - ➤This information is assessed during evaluations (i.e., barriers to transition).
  - ➤Data Rights Cert is made a part of the award instrument (for contracts).

Communications

- **Prior to Receipt of Proposals (Solicitation Phase): No restrictions, however Gov't (PM/PCO) shall not dictate solutions or transfer technology.**

- **After Receipt of Proposals (Scientific Review Phase): Prior to Selection: Government (PM/PCO) may communicate with offerors in order to understand the meaning of some aspect of the proposal that is not clear or to obtain confirmation or substantiation of a proposed approach, solution, or cost estimate.**

- **After Selection/Prior to Award (Negotiation Phase): Government (PCO) may clarify aspects of the proposal and/or may conduct negotiations. Government (PM/COR/PCO) may clarify the Statement of Work or, in cases where only portions of the proposal are accepted, may discuss reductions to the scope to match the selected effort.**

- **Informal Feedback Sessions (Post Award): may be requested/provided once the selection(s) are made.**
  - If made on a timely basis, all requests will be accepted.

FAQ

- **Questions must be submitted in writing to DARPA-BAA-15-14@darpa.mil.**
  – Send by no later than 13 March 2015 (2pm Eastern).
  – Avoid including proprietary/sensitive information (mark such info if included).

- **Questions and Government Responses will be maintained via a BAA FAQ which is continually updated until the BAA closing date.**

- **FAQ will be posted to:**
  – http://www.darpa.mil/Opportunities/Solicitations/MTO_Solicitations.aspx (the MTO office solicitations page).
  – Select "DARPA-BAA-15-14."
  – The link will direct you to the N-ZERO overview page and the FAQ will be posted in a PDF accessible file under the "Important Links" section.